



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 974-1101
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

April 3, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

SACRAMENTO UPDATE

Executive Summary

This memorandum provides an update on the following:

- **Pursuit of County Position on Legislation:**

- **AB 639 (Perez)**, which would enact the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Act, to repurpose the Veterans' Bond Act of 2008 for the construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of multi-family and supportive housing for veterans. AB 639 would be submitted for the November 4, 2014 general election for voter approval. Therefore, unless otherwise directed by the Board, consistent with existing policy to support proposals to increase efforts to reduce homelessness for veterans and their families, increase affordable housing, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, training, and employment opportunities, **the Sacramento advocates will support AB 639.**
- **SB 296 (Correa)**, which would appropriate \$5.0 million from the State General Fund to the California Department of Veterans Affairs for disbursement to counties to fund county veterans service officers. Therefore, unless otherwise directed by the Board, consistent with existing policy to support proposals that provide essential assistance to those who have honorably served in our armed forces, **the Sacramento advocates will support SB 296.**

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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Intra-County Correspondence Sent Electronically Only

- **Status of County-Advocacy Legislation**

- **County-Supported AB 406 (Torres and Bloom)** - related to child abuse reporting teams passed the Assembly Public Safety Committee on April 2, 2013.

Pursuit of County Position on Legislation

AB 639 (Perez), which as introduced on February 20, 2013, would enact the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Act (VHHPA) which would reduce the amount of bonds that are authorized to be issued under the Veterans' Bond Act of 2008 from \$900.0 million to \$300.0 million. AB 639 would instead authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$600.0 million for expenditure by the California Department of Housing and Community Development, collaborating with the California Department of Veterans Affairs, for the construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of multi-family and supportive housing for veterans. The bill would also authorize the Legislature to amend the provisions of the VHHPA under specified criteria and imposes a reporting requirement on the California Housing Finance Agency. If enacted, AB 639 would be submitted for the November 4, 2014 general election for voter approval.

In 2008, voters passed Proposition 12, the Veterans' Bond Act, a \$900 million general obligation bond intended to help veterans purchase single family homes, farms, and mobile homes through the CalVet Farm and Home Loan Program. Since the passage of Proposition 12, the full \$900 million remains unspent as does over half of the funds authorized by Proposition 32 of 2000, which provides funding for the CalVet Loan Program. Since 2000, over \$1.0 billion in voter approved bonds funds for veterans housing has accumulated. However, the funding is restricted to single family homes while the need for multi-family and supportive housing for veterans has significantly increased.

AB 639 would, pursuant to voter approval, amend Proposition 12 and restructure \$600 million of the existing Proposition 12 bond authority to construct and rehabilitate multi-family veterans housing that is affordable and supportive. The VHHPA would focus on veterans that are at risk for homelessness or are homeless and in need of supportive services such as mental health and substance abuse treatment and employment services.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) indicates that AB 639 promotes the goal, outlined by the White House and Secretary of Veterans Affairs, of ending veteran homelessness by 2015 and that increasing supportive housing availability for veterans is especially critical now to address the needs of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. According to MVA, housing subsidies have decreased due to the

Federal sequestration, and passage of AB 639 would make funding available for veterans' multi-family housing with a focus on supportive housing services.

The Community Development Commission (CDC) indicates that while AB 639 would not directly impact CDC-administered funding or programs, the bill would increase the supply of affordable housing for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Department of Public Health (DPH) notes that providing affordable housing in coordination with supportive program services, including mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment, can help reduce the number of homeless veterans. DPH indicates that AB 639 would promote efforts to provide comprehensive, coordinated, and cost-effective program services to help returning veterans stabilize their lives.

This office, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the Community Development Commission, and Department of Public Health support AB 639. Therefore, unless otherwise directed by the Board, consistent with existing policy to support proposals to increase efforts to reduce homelessness for veterans and their families, increase affordable housing, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, training, and employment opportunities, **the Sacramento advocates will support AB 639.**

AB 639 is sponsored by the California Association of Veteran Services Agencies and the Corporation of Supportive Housing and is supported by the Burbank Housing Development Corporation and the City of Oakland. Currently, there is no registered opposition.

AB 639 is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee on April 17, 2013.

SB 296 (Correa), which as introduced on February 15, 2013, would appropriate \$5.0 million from the State General Fund to the California Department of Veterans Affairs for disbursement to counties to fund the activities of county veterans service officers.

County veterans service officers (CVSOs) are the initial local point of contact for veterans and claimants accessing the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Currently, the cost to maintain the CVSOs is shared between the State and counties, with the State share supporting approximately 16 percent of the costs of the CVSOs and counties covering the remainder. SB 608 (Chapter 318, Statutes of 1997), signed into law by Governor Wilson, requires the Department of Finance to consider an increase in the annual budget for the CVSOs of up to \$5.0 million, if approved in the yearly budget process. SB 419 (Chapter 183, Statutes of 2009), signed by Governor Schwarzenegger, increased that amount to \$11.0 million, again contingent on approval in the yearly budget process.

Each Supervisor
April 3, 2013
Page 4

Between 1995 and 2011, the State cumulatively budgeted \$36.2 million for its share of the cost of the CVSOs. During this same time period, CVSOs have leveraged approximately \$3.3 billion in Federal monetary benefits for veterans and their dependents. However, the State has never reached the allowable State budget allocation of \$5.0 million set in 1997. To date, the CVSOs have not received more than \$2.6 million annually from the State.

As introduced, SB 296 would appropriate \$5.0 million, authorized by SB 608 of 1997, to the California Department of Veterans Affairs to allocate to counties to fund CVSO activities and services.

According to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, an estimated 400,000 veterans, active duty military and their families live in Los Angeles County. Currently, the County receives \$177,000 annually in State funding to support CVSO services. Under SB 296, this funding would almost double. This increase would significantly assist the County in meeting the needs of current and returning veterans, especially those under- and un-served veterans and their dependents who are not aware of the Federal benefits available to them.

Therefore, unless otherwise directed by the Board, consistent with existing policy to support proposals that provide essential assistance to those who have honorably served in our armed forces, **the Sacramento advocates will support SB 296.**

SB 296 is scheduled for hearing in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on April 9, 2013.

Status of County-Advocacy Legislation

County-Supported AB 406 (Torres and Bloom), which as introduced on February 15, 2013, would repeal the January 1, 2014 sunset clause to allow county child abuse Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) engaged in the investigation of suspected child abuse and neglect to utilize two-person MDTs when disclosing or exchanging information, passed the Assembly Public Safety Committee by a vote of 7 to 0 on April 2, 2013. This measure now proceeds to the Assembly Floor.

We will continue to keep you advised.

WTF:RA
MR:KA:ma

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist